

Message Text

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ACTION A-01

INFO OCT-01 NEA-07 ISO-00 H-03 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
/027 W

-----082128 230701Z /12

O R 230523Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3091
INFO AMEMBASSY SANA
CHUSMTM DHAHRAN//J-3//
USMTM/DCR RIYADH
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE//ECDC/ECCS/ECJ3//
OSAF WASHDC//SAFLL
SECDEF WASHDC//ASD/ISA/DSAA//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 JIDDA 6144

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OREP, PEPR, SA (SIKES, ROBERT AND FLYNT, JOHN)
SUBJ: CODEL SIKES/FLYNT MEETING WITH FON MIN PRINCE SAUD

SUMMARY: CODEL SIKES/FLYNT MET FOR AN HOUR WITH FOREIGN
MINISTER PRINCE SAUD AUGUST 21. PRINCE SAUD DESCRIBED
SOVIET THREAT AND CONGRESSMEN AGREED THAT IT WAS REAL.
CONGRESSMAN SIKES THOUGHT THAT IT MIGHT STILL BE POSSIBLE
FOR CONGRESS TO MAKE SOME FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR MILITARY
ASSISTANCE TO YAR DURING FISCAL YEAR 1979.

1. CONGRESSMAN ROBERT SIKES AND CONGRESSMAN JOHN FLYNT MET
FOR AN HOUR WITH FOREIGN MINISTER PRINCE SAUD ON AUGUST 21.
MEETING WAS ALSO ATTENDED BY AMBASSADOR, SPECIAL COUNSELOR
ISA SABBAGH, MAJOR LONNIE ALEXANDER, ASSISTANT DATT AND
POLITICAL COUNSELOR.

2. PRINCE SAUD DISCUSSED THE SOVIET THREAT TO NORTH YEMEN
AND TO SAUDI ARABIA. CONGRESSMEN SIKES AND FLYNT AGREED THAT
THE THREAT WAS REAL AND EXPRESSED THEIR APPRECIATION FOR
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EFFORTS OF SAUDI ARABIA IN COUNTERING SOVIET THREAT NOT
ONLY TO YAR AND SAUDI ARABIA BUT ALSO TO U.S. INTERESTS
IN THE REGION. THEY NOTED THAT IF SOVIETS GAINED CONTROL
OF THE AREA, THEY WOULD BE IN POSITION TO CUT OFF OIL
SUPPLIES TO THE WEST. CONGRESSMAN SIKES EXPLAINED THAT REASON HE
AND HIS COLLEAGUE WERE IN SAUDI ARABIA AND WERE GOING TO YAR
WAS SO THAT THEY COULD BE CERTAIN THEY HAVE A CLEAR PIC-

TURE OF THE SITUATION. UNFORTUNATELY, PEOPLE IN THE U.S. DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE THREAT IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. THE PRESS DOES NOT REPORT IT ADEQUATELY AND AMERICANS THUS DEVELOP A SENSE OF FALSE SECURITY. HE SAID THAT HE AND CONGRESSMAN FLYNT WANT TO BE IN A POSITION TO EXPLAIN THE THREAT IN THE U.S. IF THE U.S. IS GOING TO HELP IN COUNTERING THE SOVIET THREAT, IT MUST ACT NOW. THE CONGRESS IS MORE WORLDLY MINDED THIS YEAR AND WOULD UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION IF IT WERE PRESENTED TO THEM.

3. CONGRESSMAN FLYNT ASKED WHETHER THE YAR COULD USE ALL THE EQUIPMENT THAT THEY WERE REQUESTING FROM THE U.S. IF NOT, HOW LONG WOULD IT TAKE FOR THEM TO LEARN TO USE THIS EQUIPMENT? HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THE YAR NEEDED A WESTERN SOURCE OF EQUIPMENT. HE NOTED THAT THE ONLY WEAPONS THAT THE YAR NOW HAS ARE SOVIET WEAPONS AND IT WOULD BE VERY EASY FOR THE SOVIETS TO PARALYZE THE YAR MILITARY SIMPLY BY CUTTING OFF SUPPLIES.

4. PRINCE SAUD SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT FOR YEMEN HAD BEEN DISCUSSED FOR TWO YEARS. THE NEED FOR THIS EQUIPMENT IS "YESTERDAY". THE THREAT BECOMES GREATER EVERY DAY. HE SAID THAT YAR HAS JUST COME OUT OF A VERY DIFFICULT PERIOD. IT HAS BEEN THROUGH A PERIOD OF OCCUPATION BY AN EXTERNAL POWER (EGYPT). IT HAS ALSO

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JUST COME OUT OF A VICIOUS CIVIL WAR. ORDER IS STILL PRECARIOUS. THE ONE INSTITUTION THAT REMAINS AND IS ABLE TO MAINTAIN SOME ORDER IS THE ARMY. HE STRESSED THAT THE SAUDIS DO NOT LIKE TO SEE THE MILITARY IN CONTROL IN THE YAR NOR WOULD THEY WANT THAT IN SAUDI ARABIA. BUT THE FACT IS THAT THE MILITARY IN YAR IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR PROMOTING STABILITY. HE SAID THAT THERE WAS BOTH AN EXTERNAL THREAT AND AN INTERNAL THREAT. THE INTERNAL THREAT WOULD BE FROM SUBVERSION. HE DID NOT THINK THAT MANY DISSIDENTS WOULD JOIN SOUTH YEMEN IN CASE OF INVASION. THERE IS A KIND OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE GOVERNMENT NOW THAT HAS RESULTED FROM THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT GHASHMI. THE NEED IS TO REPLACE THE SOVIETS SO AS TO ELIMINATE A SOURCE OF SUBVERSION. TO DO THAT WE MUST FIND ANOTHER SOURCE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT FOR THE ARMY. THIS IS NOT PURELY A TECHNICAL AND MILITARY REQUIREMENT. SAG UNDERSTANDS THE PROBLEMS OF ABSORBABILITY AND TALKS TO THEM ABOUT IT CONSTANTLY. SAG ALSO RECOGNIZES THE FINE LINE BETWEEN PURELY MILITARY REQUIREMENTS AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT THAT MILITARY EQUIPMENT HAS ON PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY IN THE FACE OF THE MASSIVE SUPPLY OF EQUIPMENT THAT SOUTH YEMEN IS GETTING FROM THE SOVIETS. HE SUMMED UP BY SAYING

THAT WE MUST ACT QUICKLY TO GIVE YAR ANOTHER SOURCE OF
SUPPLY.

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5. CONGRESSMAN FLYNT WANTED TO KNOW WHETHER THE SOVIET
EQUIPMENT PRESENTLY IN YAR INVENTORY WOULD BE SERVICEABLE
IN CASE OF WAR. SAUD ANSWERED THAT THE SOVIET UNION MAKES
OFFERS ON NEW EQUIPMENT EVERY DAY. THE SOVIET PURPOSE IS
TO SHOW THAT THE YAR CAN GET ALL THE EQUIPMENT IT NEEDS
FROM THE USSR BUT THAT IF YAR WENT TO THE U.S. IT WOULD
HAVE GTROUBLE GETTING WHAT IT NEEDED. RETURNING TO THE
QUESTION OF THE URGENCY OF THE NEED FOR NEW MILITARY EQUIP-
MENT HE SAID THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO THINK IN TERMS
GREATER THAN A FEW MONTHS. NORTH YEMEN NEEDS TO BE STA-
BILIZED IN THE NEXT 3-4 MONTHS OR IT WOULD BE TOO LATE.

6. CONGRESSMAN SIKES NOTED THAT EVEN IF THE U.S. GAVE
A COMMITMENT FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT NOW, IT WOULD TAKE
SOME TIME FOR IT TO BE DEVELOPED. HE WANTED TO KNOW WHAT
EFFECT SUCH COMMITMENTS WOULD HAVE ON STABILITY IN THE
YAR. MIGHT NOT SOUTH YEMEN TAKE ADVANTAGE IN THE SLOWNESS
OF IMPLEMENTATION TO MAKE A PREEMPTIVE MOVE AGAINST NORTH
YEMEN?

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7. SAUD SAID THAT IF THE U.S. GAVE A COMMITMENT HE WAS SURE THAT IT WOULD FIND A WAY TO IMPLEMENT IT SO AS TO MEET THE EMERGENCY. HE SAID HE WAS GLAD THAT THE CONGRESSMEN WERE GOING TO SANA. THEIR VISIT THERE WOULD GIVE THEM A SENSE OF THE URGENCY REQUIRED. AS TO THE AMOUNTS OF EQUIPMENT TO BE SUPPLIED, HE SAID THAT IF WE GAVE THE YAR ONE FOR EVERY TEN GIVEN BY THE USSR TO SOUTH YEMEN THAT WOULD BE SUFFICIENT. IN ANY EVENT, HE WAS GOING TO HAND THE AMBASSADOR A LETTER TODAY FROM KING KHALID SETTING FORTH SAUDI VIEWS ON MILITARY REQUIREMENTS FOR YAR.

8. CONGRESSMAN SIKES THOUGHT THAT SOMETHING STILL MIGHT BE DONE TO PUT SOME AID TO YEMEN IN THE FISCAL YEAR 1979 BUDGET. PRINCE SAUD SAID THAT THIS WOULD BE VERY GOOD. IT WOULD BE A SIGNAL TO THE USSR. IT WOULD STOP THEM FROM MOVING AGAINST THE YAR AND GIVE THE YAR AND SAUDI ARABIA AN OPPROTUNITY TO GET ON WITH THEIR DEVELOPMENT. AID FOR YAR WOULD COST VERY LITTLE NOW. TWO YEARS FROM NOW IT WILL BE VERY MUCH MORE EXPENSIVE.

9. AMBASSADOR WEST ASKED PRINCE SAUD IF THE YAR WANTED THE U.S. AND SAUDI ARABIA TO PROCEED WITH THE FIRST PART OF ITS JOINT PROGRAM SO THAT IT COULD HAVE A SHOW OF STRENGTH IN THE NATIONAL DAY PARADE ON SEPTEMBER 26. HAD PRINCE SAUD GOTTEN ANY ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION FROM THE YARG? PRINCE SAUD SAID THAT YAR WANTS TO SEE SOMETHING OF SUBSTANCE RATHER THAN SOMETHING "FOR SHOW". THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT WE HOPE TO CONVINCE YAR THAT THE U.S. HAS A REAL COMMITMENT. WHILE IMPLEMENTATION WILL BE RESTRAINED, YAR SHOULD STILL ACCEPT THE COMMITMENT. PRINCE SAUD SAID THAT HE PREFERRED TO LEAVE THIS LINE FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND HE HOPED THAT CONGRESS COULD PRO-

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VIDE SOME SUBSTANTIAL MEASURE OF AID. THE SOVIETS ARE ASKING THE YAR MILITARY EVERY DAY WHAT THE U.S. IS DOING FOR THEM. YAR LEADERS ARE EMBARRASSED.

10. CONGRESSMAN FLYNT CLOSED THE MEETING BY SAYING THAT THE TWO CONGRESSMEN COULD EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS IN THE U.S. AND IN CONGRESS BUT THAT THEY COULD NOT IMPLEMENT A PROGRAM FOR THE YAR. HE AND CONGRESSMAN SIKES WOULD WORK HARD TO GET A PROGRAM BECAUSE THEY REALIZED THAT THE FIGHT FOR THE YAR WAS A FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL. PRINCE SAUD THANKED THEM FOR THEIR VISIT AND SAID THAT HE WOULD WELCOME MORE CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS COMING TO SAUDI ARABIA.

11. CONGRESSMAN SIKES AND FLYNT HAVE SEEN AND APPROVED.
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